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MISSIONS

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### THE SAVIOR'S INJUNCTION TO HIS DISCIPLES.

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*"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."* MARK xvi, 15.

AMONG all the events recorded in the history of man, perhaps no one is more important than the advent of our Savior. None certainly demands of us a more frequent and grateful remembrance. Even aside from all consideration of the atonement, changes were then introduced in the circumstances of men more favorable than any which have signalised any other epoch. The advent of the Savior fulfilled, confirmed, and illustrated many obscure prophecies and types of the Old Testament. It unfolded more clearly and fully the character of that Messiah, who had been, and was in future more eminently to be, the special object of faith and worship to the people of God. But what is infinitely more important, this event was made the signal for breaking down the wall of partition between Jews and Heathens, and of extending to the latter the means of grace and the blessings "of the common salvation."

The prophets who prophesied of the grace that should come unto us, while they were "searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify," were at times indulged with a glimpse of these events. "Sing unto the Lord a new song," says one, "let

the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout for joy from the top of the mountains—for thus saith the Lord—I have called thee in righteousness and will give thee a covenant for the people, *for a light of the Gentiles.*—Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth, I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment *to the Gentiles.*” And when the time of these glorious events approached, and they were viewed as no longer in prospect, when the Savior actually exhibits himself clothed in human flesh, even angels catch the joy, and beholding “the glory that should follow,” the glory of Christ among the Gentiles, they burst forth in songs, and proclaim, “Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be *to all people.* Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Soon after the birth of Jesus, an aged prophet of the Lord takes the infant in his arms and rejoices and gives thanks that his eyes had seen that salvation which God had “prepared *for all people,*”\* that light which he had given “*to lighten the Gentiles.*”

From our Savior's own words and conduct we see abundant reason to believe, that the great purpose of bringing the scattered heathen into his fold, was one of those which always lay nearest his heart. He announces it among the other subjects on which he preached to his disciples; he preaches it plainly and boldly to the proud, unbelieving, and indignant Jews; and when he can no longer pass from village to village preaching his own gospel, when the solemn moment arrives that he must leave his beloved disciples and give them his parting admonitions, the miserable heathen are not forgotten. Their wretched condition seems quite to engross the benevolent feelings of his soul, and to swallow up every other subject. He stops not to express to his disciples that personal attachment to them with which his bosom overflowed. He stops not to give them wise maxims to regulate their private life. He speaks of no subject but that of sending his gospel to the heathen. He has one farewell request, and *only* one, to make to them, and that he expresses in the language of our text, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

\* Schleusner's rendering.



In contemplating the import of this solemn injunction, various topics of remark suggest themselves, but those selected for present consideration are only the following.

THE REASONS OF THE COMMAND.

THE WORK REQUIRED.

THE PERSONS ADDRESSED.

I. *The reasons of the command.* Why was it given?

In view of the immense labor and sufferings necessary to its fulfilment, what probably were some of those overcoming motives which constrained the Redeemer to impose such a duty?—Doubtless *one* of these reasons was, that his kingdom and glory among men might be extended. Perhaps *another* was, that he might give scope, activity, and improvement to the highest benevolent energies of his people. *Another* reason of some importance seems to have been, that he might by his gospel overthrow the false philosophy and cruel superstitions of the heathen, and raise them to a higher state of civilization and refinement. The glory of the Godhead, the spiritual improvement of his people, and the temporal benefit of all men, are objects unquestionably accomplished by obedience to this command of our Savior, and it appears neither unnatural nor irreverent to impute them to him as motives for giving it. But besides all these reasons for commanding the gospel to be preached to every creature, *another still* suggests itself, over which we cannot pass so rapidly. It is this, that *the heathen without the gospel were exposed to perdition.*

If the heathen, as a body, are likely to be lost, it is a tremendous truth, and it is one which needs to be thoroughly understood before the force of the divine command under consideration, can be adequately felt. Let us then approach to the examination of this point, with a simple desire to know the real truth, and to understand our whole duty; and let us bring with us hearts as attentive, and candid, and solemn, as the consideration can make them, that eternal life or death to many souls may be the consequence of our decision.—The supposition that the heathen, remaining such, are likely to be lost, is neither unscriptural nor unreasonable, and by a little attention, it would seem that most minds must be convinced that it is a truth scarcely less evident than it is painful. Search the whole sacred volume through, and what solitary token do you find God to have given, of his approbation of the heathen. Nay rather,

what judgments has he left unthreatened against all the worshippers of idols, without distinction, against all who worship and serve the creature more than the Creator. Look at the conduct and the opinions of the apostles, those missionaries of Jesus who received their commission from his own mouth. What thought they of the state of the heathen? What high commanding object was it, which, while they carried abroad the gospel, produced in them that irresistible earnestness, that burning zeal, that heedless contempt of danger and of suffering, and that unconquerable, unwearied perseverance until death? What mighty purpose could it have been, which thus filled their souls, and bore them on through every variety of worldly affliction? Can it be said that the heathen to whom they preached were all in the safe way to eternal life, and that the apostles wished merely to civilize and refine them? Was it for *this* they broke in upon the safety of the heathen, and laid before them that gospel which they received as foolishness, and which to by far the greater portion of them blocked up the way to heaven in which, by the supposition, they were walking, since it was to them a savor of death unto death? Was it such a prospect—a prospect of *destruction* instead of salvation to souls—which so supported and animated the apostles in their work? or shall we believe them, and treat them as men of at least common humanity, honesty, and truth, when they declare that they did all this *that they* “*might by all means save some.*”

That the heathen are in the way to ruin, is evident from the fact, that they are in the way of sin. They are not only *ignorant* but *wicked*. Instead of acting honestly, according to the light that is given them, that very light, the “law written on their hearts,” places them in a state of acknowledged condemnation. For the testimony of an apostle on this point, look at the opening of the epistle to the Romans. For historical testimony of modern date, take the concurrent voice of all men of piety, missionaries, judges, and statesmen, whose opinions on the case have been formed, not at a distance, but on heathen ground—not from theory, but from actual observation and experiment. “*There is a man,*” says Dr. Ward, “entering on a pilgrimage. He expects to travel 1000 miles, perhaps, on foot, begging his way there and home again. Under that tree sits a man repeating the name of his guardian deity,



—counting the repetitions by his bead roll. He employs a part of each day in this work, which he intends to continue till death. Ask these men their reasons for doing these things, and they will tell you it is to wash away their sins." Now, with such a consciousness of guilt upon them, can it be imagined that the heathen live according to the dictates of their consciences? Dr. Ward, after twenty years experiment, declares that he had never yet found one heathen man, who appeared to fear God and work righteousness. This last assertion is also made, in nearly the same words, by a writer in the *Christian Observer*, said to be Lord Teignmouth, who had been for some years governor general of Bengal. "I never saw," he says, "*a single heathen*, of whom I could say, this man fears God and works righteousness." At a public meeting in London, Sir William Burroughs, and Sir James McIntosh, who had both held the office of chief justice in different parts of India, gave in a most melancholy testimony in regard to heathen morals. The former, speaking of the causes brought before him for trial, says, "I do not remember a single native case of importance, in which the perjury on both sides was not shocking to the feelings." The latter speaks thus; "I have in my judicial situation in India had many opportunities of witnessing the total want of moral effect in the superstition (miscalled religion) of the native inhabitants. I have with pain observed their total want of truth in their evidence. Indeed to such a degree is this immorality carried, that Sir William Jones, notwithstanding his partiality toward that people, has himself been compelled to admit its existence to a degree which made it difficult for a judge to say, after he had decided a cause among them, whether that decision were founded on the basis of truth. It is this disregard of truth among the Hindoos, which compels me to declare that the system of opinions called religion among them, *has no moral use at all*. It enforces *no duty* in life, and so far from being an aid to the magistrate, it is rather an obstacle." References of this sort might be greatly multiplied, but it were needless. Suffice it to say, that the whole concurrent testimony of men best qualified to judge on this subject is of the same tenor as that of those already adduced. If, then, such be the real state of the heathen heart, with scarcely a known exception, among a people, too, the most devoted perhaps of any in the world to their religious

system, who after this will venture to say that "the heathen are honest men" "sincere inquirers after truth," and "doing the best they are able?" Who can believe an absurdity so monstrous, as that such souls are qualified to mingle with angels and glorified saints, and to participate in the holy joys and worship of the heavenly Jerusalem? "Into that city there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth." "Blessed are they that do the commandments of God,—that they may enter in through the gates into the city; for without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and *idolaters*."—Such then being the moral state and the prospects of the heathen, our Savior, surveying them with an eye of divine compassion, was moved to wink at the times of their ignorance no longer, but to send the command to "*all men everywhere, to repent*." On leaving his gospel in sacred deposit with his disciples, to be applied as the sovereign remedy for the miseries of man, the perishing state of the heathen appears to be one of the strongest reasons why he left the command to preach that gospel to every creature.

II. *The work enjoined by the command.* What is the nature of the work? What are the measures to be taken by the disciples of Jesus in order to put the heathen in possession of the gospel? Unquestionably by this term our Savior meant that work which we call preaching, at the present day, viz. that of declaring divine truth, in set discourses, to public assemblies: for this mode of preaching is sanctioned both by the example of our Savior and by that of his apostles. Nor does it appear unlikely that, by this mode of preaching chiefly, the kingdoms of this world will eventually be made the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. But while we admit that this is, in the more *special* sense, *preaching the gospel*, we ought not for a moment to suppose that this is all, or even the greater part, of what the term fairly and properly includes. To preach the gospel in the true sense of the word used by our Savior, is nothing more nor less than to *publish* it. The following passages, where, in the original, the same term is employed as in the text, may help to illustrate its use. "Jesus saith unto the leper, See thou say nothing to any man, but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest. But he went out and began to *publish* it much." "And he charged them



that they should tell no man; but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they *published it*." "And the gospel must first be *published* among all nations." Jesus said to a demoniac he had cured, "Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way and *published* throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him." Every method therefore that can be taken to *publish* the knowledge of Christ, every work which tends to bring out the gospel from obscurity, and urge it upon the attention of the world, every act and every word which conveys divine truth to the human understanding, is in some sense *preaching the gospel*. And not only so, but every work *auxiliary* to these, bears the same character in a greater or less degree, in proportion as it acts more or less directly upon the great object. All that process, therefore, which is necessary to prepare a preacher of the gospel for his office, all that labor necessary to support him in it, whether this labor be performed by himself or by his friends, are no unimportant parts of the great work commanded by our Savior. Paul was no less really contributing to the spread of the gospel while making tents with Aquila, than while reasoning in the Corinthian synagogue. Live he must, or preach he could not. Now if, at this time, some friend of Paul could have stepped in, and taken this manual labor off his hands, and furnished him with his daily bread, and with the opportunity of preaching constantly, such a friend evidently would have been instrumental in giving the gospel to Corinth, no less really than the apostle himself. The work of preaching the gospel to every creature, is an extensive and diversified work. It has a great variety of parts, some indirect in their influence, some small and insignificant in themselves, but all essential. As is the case in a complicated machine, the special effect intended by it may be accomplished by the immediate operation of a single part, and yet that part may be no more essential to the result than every other organ in the instrument.

So various and yet so connected are the means to be used in evangelizing the heathen, that it is ordinarily in the power of every person to use them and to do the cause essential service. Time was, when the private Christian, however he might desire to benefit his pagan brethren of the human race, saw himself in a manner shut out from all

possible approach to them. He could lift his heart to God in their behalf, but in every other respect he must stand and survey them in passive grief. That time is now gone by. Channels, wide and many, are now open through which the obscurest Christian can act upon the heathen world with the same ease with which he relieves the beggar at his door. Missionary operations are begun upon system. Men are associating in the work far and near, maturing plans, combining energies and efforts, collecting and diffusing information, and inviting the co-operation of all who are taught to pray, "*thy kingdom come.*" A few have already repaired to the distant scene of action, and are wielding with success "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."—In this war proclaimed by the King of Zion, thousands are needed for the field, some to charge the enemy, some to stay by the staff, and manage the concerns of the camp. Tens of thousands are needed in stations more retired to provide the strength and sinews of the struggle. The pen, the press, the pulpit, the social circle, must all be improved to excite public attention, to correct public opinion, to rouse and sustain public feeling. Some must gather and train new recruits for the foreign service; others must volunteer to go, or must send their substitutes, some must make journeys to collect and forward supplies; while the thousands who remain at their fire sides, uninterrupted in their business, may no less testify their love and loyalty to their sovereign, by contributing, from the avails of their industry, articles, without which no army on earth, spiritual or civil, was ever yet sustained.—Such is the extent of the work commanded by our Savior, and such the variety of means that may be used in accomplishing it. Go then, Christian brethren, to the business of your calling, one to your farm, and another to your merchandize, or your mechanical trade, and feel that even *there* you can obey the command of Christ to spread the gospel. You have lamented that in your retired situation you could do so little for the perishing heathen, that their relief came so little within your power or province. Feel then that you occupy as important a post in this work as he who proceeds to the missionary field. Retired and distant as you may be from the pagan world, perhaps it is not too much to say, that there is not a heathen nation in existence, so far removed from holiness and from you, that you cannot make it feel



your influence. Were all the wealth and influence and energies of Christians like you, brought to bear upon this object, they would command men enough, and ships enough, and may it not be safely added, *divine grace* enough too, not only to carry the gospel to the heathen, but so to carry it as to put a stop at once to their desolating abominations.

III. *The persons addressed.*—Those to whom this injunction was originally and directly spoken, seem to have been the eleven apostles, and they accordingly “went forth preaching the word everywhere,”—that is to say, in every direction. But without greater miracles than it pleased God to work, these men could not carry into full effect the command of their Divine Master, nor could he fulfil *to them personally* that promise, “Lo I am with you alway even to the end of the world.” The command therefore was not addressed exclusively to them. Nor, for the same reasons, could it have been addressed solely to the Apostles including their immediate successors. Nor are preachers of the gospel the only *class* of persons addressed by it; since most of them, unaided, are prevented from ever reaching heathen ground by a natural impossibility. The truth is, this command implies far more than it speaks. As it embraces a vast deal of *work* which it does not specify; so also it is addressed to a vast *multitude of people* of whom no special mention is made by the Evangelist.—In the *first* place, it doubtless must remain obligatory on every generation of men until the work commanded shall be accomplished.—In the *second* place, it is one of those commands which involve relative duties, duties which can be fulfilled only by the co-operation of two or more parties, and in which case, a command addressed to one party is necessarily and equally binding on the other. And as the command resting on the head of a family to *rule* his own house well, imposes on his household the relative obligation to *obey*, and as the command to some to *preach* the gospel, involves the corresponding duty in others to *hear* it, so also the command to some to *go* to the heathen, involves in others the corresponding obligation to *send* them; for “how shall they preach except they be sent?” In the great work then of spreading the gospel, *going*, and *sending*, and *preaching*, are duties that are inseparable, duties dependent on each other, duties therefore which necessarily are all alike

enjoined in this command of Christ.—*Thirdly*, this command requires not only that auxiliary labor, which is *directly necessary*, and which is the obvious result of relative duty among brethren, but it lays a demand on *all* auxiliary labor. It claims not only what *must* be done, but what *can* be done. It is binding on all persons who can obey it *in any way*, and by any means within their reach. It is binding, and with an equal force, on all who can *preach* the gospel, and on all who can *cause* it to be preached; on all who can go, on all who can send, and on all who can *assist* in sending.—It is addressed then with equal emphasis to man and woman, to minister and people, to saint and sinner, to all who have substance to give, or influence to exert, or hearts to pray, for the perishing heathen.

Has any one of you, then, my brethren, heretofore thought that you had nothing to do with this command of Christ. Know then that you have *everything* to do with it. If *you* have nothing to do with it, then neither has any other person. Prove, if you can, that this command has no binding application to *you*, and you may prove that it has no binding application at all. Prove that *this* command has no such application, and you may prove the same of every other command like it; and you absolve yourself and the world together, from all obligation whatever in the case. Then have we no requirement left to spread the gospel. Salvation in abundance, like floods of milk and wine, has been purchased for the heathen, but here it lies upon our hands, with no provision made to send it to them. But if such provision has been made; if Jesus Christ not only left a remedy for the corruptions of the heathen, but solemnly commanded its application; if this command of his did not die with the apostles, and cannot die while heathenism lives; if it requires a work which we can all engage in, and therefore we are among the number to whom it is addressed; then let us stand with open ears and hearts, and bid it welcome. Let it fall as with a voice of thunder upon the conscience that has hitherto felt nothing; and, come what will, and cost what it may, let it be obeyed. We have here no distracting variety of motives. The consideration which urges us on to duty, is one of the simplest kind. We have not come to contemplate the poverty and guilt, the actual and the threatening miseries of the heathen.



We have not come to contemplate the zeal of others, nor the probabilities of great success in the work of missions. We have come to contemplate simply a *divine command* upon the subject. No matter, for the present, whether the heathen are rich or poor, happy or wretched, safe or ruined. No matter what others will or will not do for their salvation. No matter what the prospect—whether the heathen desire or detest our gospel, and whether all our efforts for them will be blessed or lost: the simple question is, *Shall we acknowledge the authority of Christ? Shall we obey, or shall we break, the solemn, plain command of him who said "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature?"*

After what has been said we may remark—

1. *The work of Missions has an ample apology.*

This cause has been often opposed, but it shrinks not from the most rigid investigation. Against every objection it is fully prepared for a defence. It is a work of magnanimity, and commends itself to reason. It is a work of humanity, and commends itself to the best feelings of the heart. But above all, it is a work of obedience to divine authority, and asserts its claims upon the conscience.

Most of the arguments commonly urged against missions to the heathen have their refutation from other sources, but if something yet more clear and decisive be demanded, we point to the last command of the Savior.

It is said, *We have heathen enough at home.* Where are they? Shew us a specimen of this heathenism. Shew us the man, be his ignorance or his hatred of the gospel what it may, who does not more or less feel its influence, and enjoy its blessings. If we have heathen enough at home to occupy all our benevolent effort, certainly it cannot be difficult to point them out. Let us then behold these multitudes who have never yet heard of the bible, who know neither what it reveals, nor where they may obtain it. Lead us to their bloody temples, that we may witness their obscene, and cruel, and destructive rites of worship. Lead us to the river banks, to count, as they pass along, the carcasses of men self-immolated, floating down to feed the monsters of the deep. Let us know where burn those fires which consume the living parents with the dead; and where march those hundreds of thousands to worship a block of

wood, crushing each other in their crowds, dying with hunger and disease, and by voluntary sacrifice, and leaving their bones to bleach with those of other pilgrims which have from generation to generation whitened the surrounding plains.\* If you cannot shew us these scenes nor any thing like them, we deny the whole ground of your objection, and affirm that we have neither heathenism at home, nor any thing like it.

But what if we admit the fact? What if there may be found, even at the very doors of our sanctuaries, men sufficiently debased to deserve the name of heathen? Why then you will say, "*Charity begins at home.*" But is this the Charity of the bible? This saying is often repeated, and not unfrequently with as much confidence as if they had been the words of an apostle; but certainly it must have had its origin from some other quarter. There is a Charity of which an apostle speaks, one which he represents as the noblest of all the Christian graces, greater than faith, greater than hope, a grace without which all knowledge and all things else are nothing. This Charity "*SEEKETH NOT HER OWN.*"—But let us make another concession. Be it so that the maxim is just, and that Charity ought to begin at home. Yet may we not ask, Is this all that Charity has to do? Is nothing more to be expected of her than simply to begin? Is she to employ all her skill and strength and substance about the mere commencement of her work? Has she no progress to make, no finishing to do? By what magic think you will her building rise, if she has no plan, no labor, no materials provided, beyond its bare foundations?—But in defending the work of missions against these objections, we are not shut up to the task of proving that worldly men in Christian lands are not heathen, nor of proving that Christian Charity is of an expansive character. It is sufficient for us to refer to the divine command in our text.—Call the despisers of the gospel what you will, and say what you will of Charity, that does not disprove the propriety and necessity of foreign missions. Their justification rests on an entirely different ground. Their grand apology, their recommendation, their authoritative claim on your support, are found in those divine words, "*Go preach the gospel to every creature.*"

\* See the accounts of Buchanan and Ward.



Do you ask, what then shall we do with these perishing men around us, who will not obey the gospel? Leave them. Leave them, if you must, to the disposal of infinite justice. Leave them with the bible in their hands, and with every facility afforded them for learning and obeying its sacred truths. Leave them where the sanctuary of God rises full in their view, a standing monitor of their duty, and with its lifted spire points them to a temple in the skies. Leave them surrounded with the heralds and other servants of Christ, the living subjects and witnesses of his mercy, and by whom he daily proclaims to them, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye (also) to the waters." And why not leave them? Look at the example of the primitive disciples. Have not we every inducement which *they* had, to send the gospel abroad? and had not they every reason that we have to confine their efforts at home? How is it then that *they* justified themselves in the course they took? Had not the churches at Jerusalem, and Antioch, and Philippi, and Corinth, heathen enough at home? heathen who had claims as strong upon them, as ours have upon us? Are our heathen more numerous than those that surrounded the church at Ephesus, or do they cry with a louder voice, or a more blind and fatal phrenzy, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians?" Why then did the disciples of Jesus ever leave Jerusalem, or Ephesus, or Corinth? Why cross sea and land in search of heathen? Had they not heathen enough at home? Why stretch their thoughts so many hundred miles off as the city of Rome? Above all, how came they ever to think of heathen in an island so distant and insignificant as the land of our fathers? Why could they not have busied themselves at home, and suffered our fathers and us, down to the present generation, to go on in our heathen abominations, sacrificing human victims, and looking for salvation to gods like Thor and Woden? We know the reasons of their conduct. Theirs was a charity which had a *progress* as well as a beginning. Theirs was that heaven-born charity which "*seeketh not her own.*" But their great commanding reason, which outweighed every other, is yet to be told. The Lord Jesus Christ, the centre of their affections, who had bought them with his blood, whom they had covenanted to serve for life, and whom to disobey was eternal death—He had said to them, "Go ye into all the world and preach." This clear-

ed up all their difficulties, silenced every murmur, and was alone sufficient to bear them through all their journies and sufferings. After hearing this command, of what avail, think you, were all the opposing maxims of men? What though their near relatives, in the ardor of their affection, clung around their necks to detain them? What though their Christian brethren, with a mistaken policy, said to them, "Stay with us—you can be useful here—despise not the claims of friends, of kindred, and of country—love not your neighbor *better* than yourselves—beware how you roam abroad, leaving heathen behind you, exposing your own lives, and weakening the hands of your brethren—by attempting to grasp too much we shall sacrifice all we have gained—by extending the outposts of Christianity at such a rate, we shall lose the *citadel itself*—we cannot consent to your departure—we need all our labor, and all our wealth, and all our men, and religion, at home." Of what avail was all this to them, when the language of Christ was, "Go:"—"Go scatter *abroad* the blessings of salvation. Diffuse *far and wide* the life-giving influence of the gospel. Let no bounds be set to your journies. Penetrate every desert, cross every sea, scale every mountain, and see that not a creature in earth's farthest, darkest corner be left untold of my sufferings and my compassion."

It is often objected that *Christ can take care of his own church*—that, when the time shall come for it, Christ can convert the heathen without our assistance. And so indeed he can. He can teach the heathen his truth by *direct inspiration*. Or if he chose to employ human instrumentality, and we refuse to act, he can raise up a host of missionaries from among the Jews, or from among the very pagans themselves. He can appear, at mid-day, in a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, and give conversion and apostleship to a thousand Pauls in a day. He can send them forth to preach without the trouble of preparation. He can send his ravens to feed them as he did to his prophet, or rain them down manna from heaven, as he did to his people in the desert. It is an important, a glorious fact, that Christ can do all this. But what has this fact to do with our present subject? Does the mere fact that Christ is almighty, secure the salvation of the heathen? In what way does it secure this, any more than it secures any other desirable object? He can preserve



your life and health without your assistance. He can convert to himself all your friends and neighbors and countrymen—all the heathen of whom you speak around you. But do you therefore sit down and rejoice over these objects as being secured? Do you banish all care, and make no provision for your worldly support, none for the religious instruction of your family, none for the public ordinances of the gospel? But allowing that Christ were not only able, but *willing*, to convert the heathen without our co-operation—allowing that their salvation is positively certain, though we do nothing: even this supposition would not affect, in the least degree, our duty to spread the gospel; and for this plain reason, that it does not alter one jot or one tittle of the Savior's last command. This solemn charge of his still remains, in all its force, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." Here is work marked out for every Christian disciple, and here are solemn orders to set about it. And shall the servant when his task is set before him stop to pry into the plans of his master, to insist on knowing the reasons and utility of the work, or to consider whether the master himself may not perform a part of it, or the whole of it? When the absolute command of Christ is resting upon us, does it become us to postpone our obedience till we shall know what the Savior himself is *able* to do, or *willing* to do?

Again it is objected that *missions are attended with little success*. We doubt the truth of the assertion, and pledge ourselves to show, by a great collection of facts, that the preaching of the gospel has been as successful *abroad*, as it has been *at home*. But if any think this impossible, and still urge the objection, we ask where are we commanded to be successful? Is this any where made a part of our duty? Has it ever been said to us, "Go fill that pagan heart with the love of God—go break up the foul system of idolatry, and bring its deluded votaries, submissive, to the foot of the cross? But if again we have failed to meet the objection, if still you cannot join in the work of missions till you have greater proofs of its success, we make our final appeal to the command of Christ. This you certainly cannot evade. Here is no proviso, no condition, no qualification. Whether the work be pleasant or irksome, easy or difficult, successful or unsuccessful, "*Go, preach the gospel.*"

In short, it is not easy to conceive what argument can stand in opposition to a mandate so plain, so authoritative, so divine. It refutes every objection, solves every doubt, sweeps away every obstacle. Bring up every ground of justification or excuse for neglecting the heathen, and it passes over them all, as fire over the wood, the hay, and the stubble. As fast as you state, one after another, your grounds of hesitation, and your queries of curiosity, the Savior will reply to you as he did to Peter, "What is that to thee? follow thou me. Feed my sheep, feed my lambs." "Attend to *your own* duty and leave the church and the world to a better providence than yours." He will say to all the difficulties, discouragements, and hardships you can mention, "Did I not know all these, ten thousand years ago? Think you I set out rashly in the work of man's redemption, and did not count the cost? Did I not know what I myself must suffer? Did I not see beforehand the sorrow, the sweat, and the agony of the garden? the mockery, the wounds, and the pangs of Calvary? Did I not see, too, what my co-workers must undergo? Think you I did not know, that to spread the news of my redemption would be a work of difficulty—that it would cost you many a purse of gold, many an aching heart and parting tear, many a night of watching, and many a day of toil, and weariness, and painfulness? I tell you the cost was faithfully and fully counted at the first, and still I thought it best to meet *my* sufferings, and still I think it best that you meet *yours*. 'Go—preach the gospel to every creature.'"

2. *This command of Christ not only removes every objection to missions, but it furnishes a powerful stimulus to action.* It comes clothed with infinite authority. It comes from the Maker and Redeemer of the world. It comes in the affecting shape of a dying charge, an injunction of such high and solemn import as to occupy the closing paragraph of the gospel. If we would evade the duty it requires, we might as well attempt to evade the duty of repentance. He that said "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," said also with that same mouth, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." If a man neglect either of these commands, of what avail will it be to him that he obey the other? "He that offendeth in *one* point is guilty of all." "Then are ye my friends," said the Redeemer, "if ye do *whatsoever* I com-



mand you." This command then of the Savior admits of no escape or evasion. It must be obeyed at every hazard. Whatever else be neglected, this must be attended to. Let it reduce every follower of Christ to the humble condition of his Master; let him have not where to lay his head; let it make him a proverb and by-word; let it bring pinching and lasting poverty, on all Christendom; let it cost us as much blood and treasure as ever wars have wasted: still we must spread the gospel. Christ has sent forth his command, and surely he will never recal it. With the consequences of our obedience we have nothing to do. Christ will take care of these and will make them sufficiently glorious. Our simple business is to go straight forward in our work:—to go forward, united, unwearied, undaunted, and to pray, and labor, and suffer, and die.

3. *Great guilt is chargeable on the Christian church.* Why is it that the heathen have remained thus long "having no hope and without God in the world?" Did that love, which brought the Savior down from heaven, permit him to leave the world without making sufficient provision for its wants? God forbid. There is balm enough in Gilead, there is a competent physician there: why then is not the health of the heathen recovered? Eighteen hundred years ago did the Savior deposit with his people that gospel which brings pardon and salvation to a revolted world. Then did he solemnly assure them that it was not for their own benefit merely that he left it, but for the benefit alike of all their brethren of the human race. Then too did he lay upon them his last and farewell charge, to see this gospel sent to all for whom he left it. This charge the church has disregarded! This gospel we have refused to publish. We hold the sovereign balm that has been left for the healing of the nations, and refuse to apply it. The river of life was set to flow through the world, but we have been filling up its channel. Its waters stand and stagnate in our land, while barrenness and death still overspread the desert beyond us. Three quarters of the world lie in ruins. Millions of heathen are daily thronging the way of perdition, not, be it observed, because Christ has made no provision for them, but because we, his unfaithful depositaries of that provision, have dared to withhold it. Multitudes of these souls, had we been faithful to our trust, would have been now numbered among the followers of the Re-

deemer; these multitudes, therefore, perish not merely by their *own* guilt, but are, in an important and fearful sense, the victims of our disobedience. Will our skirts be found clean when God maketh inquisition for blood? Will not that be a tremendous moment when Christ shall summon us before him, to inquire what use we made of his sacred deposit? With what face shall we meet him? and with what face shall we meet the heathen at the judgment, when first they shall be told what provision Christ had made for them and how cruelly we withheld it? With what feelings shall we listen to their trial, and hear at last the appalling sentence that seals their final doom? Will not conscious guilt overwhelm us, will not the dread of divine wrath fall upon us, and shall we not *deserve* as well as fear to be swept away in the general condemnation? The Lord grant that we may find mercy at that day.—*Amen.*

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### ADMITTED TRUTHS.

THE efforts made by Christians, within the last thirty years, to send the gospel into the dark places of the earth, have left a deep impression extensively upon the minds of reflecting men, that the following positions are unquestionable: viz.

That the state of the heathen nations now is substantially the same, as it was in the days of the apostles;—

That, in many countries called Christian, the inventions of men and the accumulated superstitions of ignorant and corrupt ages, have utterly eclipsed the light of revelation, and reduced millions of souls very nearly to the level of absolute paganism;—

That, reckoning heathens, Mohammedans, and the ignorant and superstitious in countries nominally Christian, we cannot avoid the conclusion, that more than nine tenths of the human race are without any correct knowledge of God and his government, any just views of sin, or any true apprehension of the way of salvation;—

That the gospel affords the only adequate relief for the temporal, as well as for the spiritual wants of men;—



That before it can afford this relief, it must be preached, understood, and obeyed;—

That wherever the gospel is preached in simplicity, and with persevering fidelity, it is proved to be the *power of God and the wisdom of God*, in some who believe;—

That, in fulfilment of the divine promises, God has shown himself willing to accompany the labors of his servants with the renewing and sanctifying influences of his Spirit; and,

That there is ample encouragement to multiply faithful teachers, and send them to every land, in expectation of a glorious advance of truth and holiness, which shall reach the nations and bring men universally to rejoice in the salvation of Christ.

Though these positions are fully admitted to be true, a very small number are found, who are willing to carry them out into all their practical consequences. Nothing can be clearer, than that men are bound to make exertions for the benefit of their fellow men, in proportion to their own ability, and the magnitude of the blessings which they endeavor to communicate. And when these blessings are inconceivably great, and the probability that they may be communicated is strong, we are bound by the general law of benevolence, if there were no express command on this subject, to make vigorous, cheerful, and long continued exertions, that there may be no failure on our part, in the great and holy work of bringing penitent sinners home to God. It is too plain for argument, that every professed follower of Christ is bound by his profession, taken in any intelligible sense, to do something for the common cause of religion; and every well instructed Christian, who thinks he knows experimentally the value of the gospel, cannot consistently do less than devote a worthy portion of his time and property to promoting the spiritual good of mankind. And this portion should be appropriated as a matter of system and of fixed principle. What portion of our time and property should be deemed worthy, must be settled by a reference to the most obvious motives of Christianity, and especially to those feelings of love, gratitude, and generous sympathy, to which the appeal is so often made by our Savior and his apostles. No conclusions short of these can be entertained for a moment, unless we go the full length of releasing ourselves from all obligation to labor for the good of others; and thus declare concerning ourselves, that we are not

partakers of the divine nature, that we have not the spirit of Christ, and that we do not lay up treasure in heaven. This would be no less, than to disinherit ourselves from our Heavenly Father's bounty, to rely for happiness upon our own resources, and to proclaim ourselves independent of God. To such frightful extremities must we be led, unless we are willing to acknowledge that we are *not our own*, but *are bought with a price*, and that no true Christian *liveth to himself*; no man who is duly mindful of his spiritual nature and his immortal destiny, can withhold from the service of the church, and of the great human family, those faculties, which he received by the grace of his Redeemer.

[*Annual Report of the Prudential Committee for 1828.*]

“Is it nothing that millions, hundreds of millions of men, advance, generation after generation, like victims to the slaughter, ignorant of Christ the Great Deliverer, so far as we are concerned, through our neglect or unfaithfulness? Will there be no requisition for blood hereafter? and is there nothing of awful responsibility in having the blood of millions upon millions required at the hands of the church? Without referring to the eternal happiness that will be lost, the accumulated misery that will be endured,—Is *obedience* only so fearful and discouraging? is there no responsibility connected with actual *disobedience* to a known and acknowledged command? Has the command to love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself, been withdrawn?—the order, ‘Go, teach all nations,’ been cancelled?—or the solemn warning, ‘If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, or those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?’ Has this lost its power? No; every moment since we professed discipleship, its application and force have been increasing, and it will be augmented by every moment that obedience is delayed?”

[*Rev. Wm. Ellis's Sermon before the London Missionary Society.*]